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Thus he bungles, not all, but many things he touches. In *Androcles* he sets out to show us that Christ never meant us to receive a blow on the second cheek, but to disarm our adversary either by displaying an exquisite sense of humor or, like Dostoieffsky's immortal Mwishkin, a baffling ingenuousness. But in the play this, and almost every point, is so prepared, so coquetted with that it is gathered by the audience without the shock that alone can compel the mind to retain its essential truth.

So it is with *Pygmalion*. It has not been given to everyone to write, talk and debate convincingly about art and pugilism, drama and medicine, music and sociology, to consort, as he once did, with the artistic aristocracy of the future, to speak in plays both like "the man of the world" and like him "of the world to come," and who else in Britain perceived that the accent of "educated people" has so much in common with Cockney that a flower girl may, with a little training in manners, represent a duchess, so long as

the manners are remembered? All this too was foretold when, in the *Dramatic Essays*, he rebuked Irving for his ridiculous vowels.

There is one idea absent from the *Preface to Pygmalion* that would perhaps have brought home the importance of the study of phonetics—it would have given point to, and established a connection with, the earlier dissertation on Christianity's Prospects. Shaw says that his play "has made people aware that there are such people as phoneticians and that they are among the most important people in England . . ." but he does not say in what the importance of phonetics lies.

And to the present writer it seems to lie in that, once versed and practiced, one can tell not where a parson was born, but the particular parish in Heaven he wishes to occupy, by the way he pronounces the name of the Deity. What a tale of Gards, Guds, Gords, Higgins could have made! He would have found one for each of the jarring sects.

M. MONTAGU-NATHAN,
From The Egoist, London.

EVERYBODY DIES

OF ALL the people who derive a large measure of happiness from the consideration of melancholy matters, Old Man Andrews is the most shining example amongst my acquaintance. He developed his faculty for this particular form of enjoyment one day as he absorbed gin and gingerbeer.

"Everybody dies," he said, following a sorrowful trail of thought from the mention of the death of an old lady at the age of ninety. "The old lady was a friend of my mother's, and nursed me when I was so high. My mother died twenty-five years ago, and now her friend's dead too!"

"Anyway," I said, "she had her full share of living, and probably she did not object to dying, as a change."

"Yes, of course she's the exception. It's when people die in the flush of their health, or when it's young children who should have years to live, that you feel it most. That's the position I took about my daughter"—

To divert his mind from what seemed a sorrowful subject, I suggested another drink, and he assented. He took the same mournful kind of liquor, and, having got it, pursued the theme.

"My girl gets a lover when she's only sixteen; not a bad fellow he isn't, either; finely set up, and a manly, straight chap all ways. They wanted to marry, but I put my foot down on it. The way I looked at it was that if they married there'd probably be children, and it was only bringing people into the world to die. I told them that she could do what she liked when she was twenty-one and her own mistress, if she didn't die before then; but from what I had seen of people dying I wasn't going to encourage it. Everybody dies, and what's the good of bringing more people into the world to do it?

"Well, of course, I'm set on my ideas, but they're just as set on theirs. So I forbade the young fellow to come near the place.

"'Not that I have anything against you,' I says to him, 'but you've got no more chance than if I hated you. My daughter isn't going to marry you. I'm not going to encourage this dying.'

"'It's living we were thinking of,' he answered. But I told him how I saw things.

"Well, he didn't come near after that; but by-and-bye I discovered that they were meeting one another on the quiet. I was angry at that; and you know how

obstinate a man gets when he's angry! Well, I made a sort of prisoner of Margie.

"I noticed a sort of change come over her in a few weeks' time; noticed it, but did not heed it—you know what I mean. She seemed restless, as if she was thinking over something that was worrying her. Then one night she comes into the room, throws her arms round me and kisses me, saying, 'Good-night father, darling!' I hardly noticed the unusualness of it until afterwards, when the wife comes in and says she can't find Margie anywhere in the house, and she knew something was going to happen by the way she kissed her good-night."

He paused, and I twisted my glass, scarcely knowing how to express sympathy at the tragedy I understood.

"Poor girl!" I said at last.

"Just then," he pursued, "the young fellow rang up on the 'phone, and he says that Margie is all right, but they're determined to marry, and he wants to see me, but supposes that, as it's so late, he'd better leave it till morning. Of course, I wouldn't allow anything of that sort, so I told him to come out straight away.

"Imagine how I felt while I waited. I was wondering whether to knock his brains out with a poker or use my revolver. But when he came in he was so straightforward that, after the first few moments, I started poking the fire to show that that was what I had the poker in my hand for.

"Margie, it appears, just like a silly girl, had run away to him; and he, being a decent, straight fellow, but one that wanted to marry her, had helped her find a boarding-house where she could stay without drawing any aspersions upon herself while he came to tackle me. He put their scheme to me: he had not abducted the girl, or harmed her in any way, and he had used no influence upon her. She

was all right; but she did not mean to return, and he did not mean to tell me where she was until I consented to their marriage.

"It was the wife that induced me to give way; so I said I would promise my consent, but they'd have to listen to me talk first, and they might change their minds. And I *did* talk to them! I pointed out that they might have children that might die; and that if he died she'd be a widow; and if *she* died he'd be a widower. But it didn't change their minds."

"Why, that," I said, "is quite a bright little romance—a thing with life, not death, in it!"

"Wait a bit," he warned me, sombrely. "He was an officer on one of the interstate boats—a risky sort of job, and he had to be out at all times and in all weathers. They'd been married less than a year, and he was away on one of his trips when it happened.

"He died?" I murmured.

"No! The baby was born. It was a fine boy, though a bit delicate; and I used to think of what would become of his parents, who simply adored him, if anything happened to him. Dear little lad, he was; I remember the day he asked me which was the oldest, me or Methusalem; because, if I was, he meant to be as old as me some day."

He gave a melancholy chuckle.

"They lived in a wild sort of place

down near the shore, George's River way; and you know how a child has to be watched where there are rocks hanging over deep water. Well, another baby comes along, and—I suppose it's because it looks more like its father than the first—Margie simply is more madly attached to this one than the other, even; consequently poor little Reggie is allowed to wander about by himself.

"I well remember the day. I was sitting on the corner of the verandah. I'd just been warning him against leaning over the water, where he'd gone with a bent pin on some cotton, when I heard little Reggie's voice call out."

"Fell in?" I suggested.

"Not he! Damned if he hadn't caught a fish on that ridiculous fishing-line, a thing about the size of a whitebait; and he comes up, proud, to show me, saying I can have some, but there must be some for daddy and mummy. Then, going into the bedroom, he sees the baby lying awake, and gives *it* the fish. As babies will, the poor little mite tried to eat it."

He paused again.

"It was the baby that died?" I hinted.

"Died?" he echoed. "It's fine and healthy, and growing; got eight teeth already."

"I thought," I excused myself, lamely, "you implied that there was a death"—

"Oh, no!" he retorted, gravely. "What I did say, was that they'll all die some day. Everybody dies!"

HAMER,

From The Bulletin, Sydney, Australia.